

DENGEKI G's

VOLUME TWELVE!!

12

NOVEL

乃木若葉は
勇者である

ガーリッシュ
ナンバー

企画監案・シリーズ構成：タカヒロ（みなとそと）

執筆：朱白あおい イラスト：BUNBUN 監修：Project 2H

著：渡 航

キャラクター原案・カラーイラスト：

QP:flapper

モノクロイラスト：やむ茶



I know it's meant to encourage everyone,
but each day, when I see the stream of [REDACTED] information,

it sends shivers down my spine.

Isn't that a sign of desperation?

Isn't the world beyond recovery now?

...No, now's not the time to complain.

We are heroes, after all.

Hero Record Mar 2019 AD

Nogi Wakaba's Record

第十二話

忘種

vol.12

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監修 / Project 2H

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--Thanks to the investigation of the heroes and miko, the Suwa area was confirmed to be safe. The Taisha is currently looking into methods of transporting goods and materials to the refugees of Suwa. There is a high possibility of human survival in places other than Suwa, and thus--"

In the cafeteria, Wakaba and the others listened to the stream of news from a portable TV placed on the table.

Today was the third day since their return to Shikoku from their investigation expedition. Everyone was about to eat udon for lunch today.

During the course of these three days, the mass media had been reporting their 'successful' investigation expedition on the TV and in newspapers.

--Again with the lies. I was looking forward to udon, but this leaves a bad taste in my mouth."

Tamako placed her chopsticks on the table with a pout.

Just as she had said, the news spreading through Shikoku had been falsified by the Taisha: Suwa was safe. Humanity was surviving outside of Shikoku. Vertex numbers were decreasing. Humanity was taking back its territory... Nothing but things the people of Shikoku wanted to hear. The complete opposite of the truth Wakaba and the others had seen outside of Shikoku.

--"Manipulating information to maintain the morale of the people, huh... That definitely is a common sight in wars, but..."

Anzu darkly murmured.

(Strategically, the Taisha's methods make sense... but still...)

Wakaba couldn't shake her apprehension. Spread lies to the populace in order to forcibly boost morale-- Historically, many who used that tactic ended up losing in the long run, didn't they? Wakaba couldn't help but feel it was a tactic for those losing the war.

--"Guys, the udon's going to get stale if we just sit around watching the news! So in that case~ if it's just going to get stale otherwise, then I'll eat Tama-chan's meat udon!"

Yuuna reached her chopsticks out to Tamako's bowl and quickly took a bite.

--"Ah!! Yuna, you~! You took some of the meat too, didn't you!"

--"Well, I thought it'd be better if I ate it for you instead of you just letting it go to waste."

--"I was going to eat it! In that case, I'll take the tofu from your kitsune udon!"

--"Ahh! But there was only one of them in there!"

An udon war broke out between Yuuna and Tamako.

- "Mmgh..."

Tamako was silenced by Anzu's scolding.

- "That was rude of you too, Yuuna-san."

- "Yes ma'am."

Yuuna, on the other hand, was shamed by Hinata's warning.

Watching her friends like this put a wry smile on Wakaba's face. The dark atmosphere had dissipated before she had noticed.

Yuuna looked around at everyone and spoke up with a cheerful voice.

- "Well, you know! The news the Taisha people are spreading might be false now, but we just have to make it all true, right? Just gotta beat up all the Vertexes and reclaim the world!"

- "Yeah, Yuuna's exactly right."

Wakaba nodded and turned off the portable TV. There was no point in listening any further. That said, there was no doubt that the false information spread in the news was exactly what the people wanted to hear. And it was the heroes' duty to make that news a reality.

- "... Thanks for the food..."

Finished eating, Chikage placed her chopsticks beside her bowl as she stood up from the table. She had been eating her udon in silence without adding to the conversation.

She tidied up her tableware, and without making eye contact with anyone, she left the cafeteria.

After returning from the expedition, she had been even quieter than usual. Instead, her expression became more stern and she became less approachable.

- "Oh right, Tama's got stuff to do too."

Tamako also got up from the table.

- "Anzu, tell the teacher I'm going to be absent from afternoon class, okay!"

- "Huh? O-okay, but..."

- "I'm not playing hooky, okay?"

Tamako quickly tidied up her tableware and left the cafeteria.

Anzu anxiously watched as Tamako walked away.



After school-- Chikage kept swinging her hero weapon, a scythe, at the training grounds. Her weapon was large-- about as long as a full human height-- but it had become light in her hands throughout her experience in battle.

Nevertheless, Chikage's expression was grim as she swung her scythe. It was as if she were venting her anger.

- "Gun-chaan!"

When she turned toward the cheerful voice, Chikage saw Yuuna running towards her from the training grounds entrance.

Yuuna stopped in front of her and spoke with just a little bit of displeasure.

- "You should've told me you were going to do some independent training. It's better to practice with a partner than to practice alone!"

- "It's independent training... so I'm doing it independently..."

- "Then I'll join you 'independently'!"

- "... okay..."

Chikage nodded, not giving a reason to refuse. If it were anyone besides Yuuna, she probably would have simply left the training grounds without a word.

The two of them practiced with a mock battle and then took a short break afterwards.

- "You've been doing independent training ever since we got back to Shikoku, huh Gun-chan?"

Yuuna looked at Chikage's face while drinking from a plastic water bottle. Something was stiff about Chikage's facial expression. Something strict.

- "It's because... we never know when the Vertexes could attack next..."

- "Hmm~ well, I guess you're right. According to Hina-chan's oracle, danger is imminent, but we don't know when exactly it'll happen..."

Hinata's oracle had told the heroes that danger was imminent upon Shikoku, and thus they cut the expedition short and returned.

However, neither Hinata, nor any of the Taisha's other miko had received any further oracles, and thus neither the timeframe nor the scale of the Vertex attack were known.

If there were more time before the enemy invasion, the heroes could have investigated a little more to the north. Not even the Taisha understood the reason for the oracle calling for an early return. Perhaps something unlike anything before was about to happen--

- "I... want to fight soon... I wish the Vertexes could just come already..."

Chikage slowly muttered.

- "Gun-chan?"

Chikage's odd choice of words prompted a worried gaze from Yuuna. Chikage looked down and stared hard at the ground.

- "The true value of a hero... is in fighting. In winning... That's what the people of Shikoku want too..."

- "..."

Yuuna listened silently to Chikage.

- "Look what the Vertexes did outside of Shikoku... I'll annihilate them all... Because otherwise, I'm worthless as a hero..."

- "Even if you're not fighting, I'm happy just to be with you, Gun-chan. You don't have to worry about difficult things like your 'worth' or anything."

Yuuna smiled.

Chikage looked back blankly for a second.

- "... I... don't really understand..."

And after muttering as such, she looked away.

By the time Tamako returned to the dorm, the sun had already set, and Anzu was standing in front of her door.

- "Oh, Anzu. What's up?"

- "..."

Anzu sent Tamako an inquisitive look.

Her serious face put some pressure on Tamako.

- "Wh-what...? Did Tama do something to make you mad? Ah, don't tell me... you found out how I slobbered all over that book I borrowed earlier!? I'm sorry! I fell asleep reading..."

- "Huh!? So that's why just one page was all warped when you returned it!?"

- "Oh, so that wasn't it!? Man, did I just screw up then!"



Tamako put her head in her arms.

- "Geez... Let's set the matter of the book aside for now. That's not it. ... Tamacchi-sempai, you're hiding something, aren't you?"

- "Hiding something...?"

Tamako faltered slightly at Anzu's pointed gaze.

- "Where did you go when you skipped classes this afternoon?"

- "..."

Tamako hesitated to speak.

- "You started looking pensive at times during the expedition, and you still do sometimes, Tamacchi-sempai..."

- "... No point in standing around talking. Let's just come inside my room for now."

Tamako opened the door and went in, followed by Anzu.

The room was littered with outdoor goods as always.

Tamako sat on a chair and Anzu sat on the bed.

- "I went to the hospital today."

- "The hospital?"

Anzu asked back dubiously.

- "Yeah, the Taisha-connected hospital. The place we always get checked up."

- "Did something happen?"

- "No... I'm not sick or injured or anything. It's just... ever since I used the fairy's power during the expedition, I guess? My body's been feeling kind of funny..."

Tamako's eyes wandered around the room as if she were searching for the right words. She couldn't quite explain what she was feeling.

After returning from the investigation expedition, all of the heroes had a check up. No abnormalities were found in any of them, and they were told that they were healthy.

I had them check me up again just in case. But still, no abnormalities were found.

- "Oh, is that it..."

Anzu sighed a breath of relief.

- "But I still do feel kinda funny... I just can't put it into words."

Tamako spoke in frustration as she brought her eyebrows up together in thought.

- "..."

Anzu's heart pounded.

These girls were experiencing things that hardly anyone had even known about throughout human history. Heroes were beings imbued with the power of the gods. Vertexes were unthinkable monsters. The situation outside the barrier was almost completely unknown. Even if no abnormalities came up in a hospital check up, that didn't necessarily mean they were perfectly fine.

- "Tamacchi-sempai. If anything happens... please don't force yourself, okay?"

Seeing the devastation of the outside world during the investigation expedition had made Anzu nervous. She couldn't help but feel anxiety.

- "Yeah, I know."

Tamako nodded meekly.

Meanwhile, Wakaba was sitting in her room in proper seiza position, deep in thought.

Such was Wakaba's style when she needed time to meditate. Normally, it'd be best to do so at a dojo, but Marugame Castle's lack of a dojo meant she had to use her room for silent meditation to clear her mind.

No Vertex attack had happened since the end of the investigation expedition, so for the time being, Wakaba and the others had returned to their daily routine. But things weren't necessarily the same as they were before.

(There's a bad atmosphere brewing through the team right now...)

The sights they had seen throughout Japan were just too shocking. The actions the Taisha took after their return was dubious. As a result, the girls were getting irritated.

Furthermore, ever since they returned to Shikoku, Chikage began talking less and her patience had been visibly wearing thin. Tamako would at times look like she was worried about something, and Anzu would get anxious seeing her like that as a result.

Yuuna's optimism was just barely keeping the team's mood in check... but things weren't looking very good.

(There has to be something I can do as leader.)



What would Hinata or Yuuna do in her position? Thinking on that angle suddenly gave Wakaba an idea.

Back during their hot spring trip at the beginning of the year, the girls played some simple games and had a fun time. It would be for the best if she could recreate that peaceful mood.

- "Games... recreation... Sounds like it could work."

Wakaba slowly muttered to herself and opened her eyes.

- "Recreation, is it? What do you plan on doing?"

Before Wakaba had realized it, Hinata was in her room, watching over her with a smile on her face.

- "H-Hinata!? Why are you here!? When did you get here!? How did you get here!?"

"You looked like you were in deep thought, so I sneaked in quietly so as to not disturb you. With stealthy, light steps. You did give me a duplicate room key after all, Wakaba-chan."

It appeared Wakaba had been concentrating so hard that she was unable to notice such a small presence and sound.

- "Don't give me a heart attack. Just come inside normally..."

- "Please, don't mind the small details. So, what's wrong, Wakaba-chan? After meditating for a while, you suddenly bring up something like recreation."

- "I got caught up in those 'small details'... Right now, there's a somewhat unpleasant mood among us all. You've noticed it too, haven't you, Hinata?"

- "... Yes, you're right."

Hinata nodded, a serious expression now on her face as well.

- "So I was thinking maybe it'd be for the best if we all did something fun together for a change of pace."

- "...!"

Hinata's eyes popped in surprise.

- "Wh... what? Why do you look so surprised?"

- "No, it's just, I never thought I'd hear -you- suggest we have fun, Wakaba-chan..."

- "... Well, I guess you're right."

Back when Wakaba had neglected to build teamwork, perhaps she wouldn't have thought of improving the team's mood. It would've been even more of a stretch to think she would have chosen to have "fun".

- "You really have changed, Wakaba-chan. Changed for the better, I'd say."

Wakaba felt a little embarrassed as Hinata smiled at her.

- "That said, exactly what sort of recreation do you want to do?"

- "Well, I was thinking of something that would get everyone excited, yet at the same time work as practice."

Wakaba's suggestion was for all the heroes to participate in a battle royale sort of mock battle. The entirety of the Marugame Castle grounds would serve as the battlefield. As grand prize, the last one standing would be allowed to order the other members to do whatever they wanted. The losers would have to abide by the winner's command.

It was a Battle Royal x Osama Game fusion event.

- "A mock battle for recreation, hmm? Sounds like something you'd suggest, Wakaba-chan."

Hinata smiled wryly.

- "And as a rule, everyone should be allowed to do anything, with the exception of using trump cards. Real hero weapons are allowed."

Wakaba gripped her beloved sword as she spoke.

- "... That's a big no-no, Wakaba-chan. What if someone gets hurt!?"

- "But if we don't do that then there won't be any air of tension..."

- "Please use mock weapons.

- "... No, but..."

- "No buts."

- "... okay."

Despite having that discussion, since the battle royale would be for practice, they obtained permission from the teachers and the event was settled.

The next afternoon. The battle begun.

From the highest castle tower window, Hinata looked down upon the grounds through binoculars. She could see the heroes scattered throughout the Marugame Castle grounds.



Marugame Castle Outer Citadel--

Chikage watched from the bushes as the battle unfolded before her eyes.

The two combatants she saw were Wakaba and Yuuna.

Both had taken martial arts training from a young age, and thus they excelled in battle ability.

They were the top two picks to win this battle royale.

- "Yuuna, I've been wanting to fight all out with you."

- "Same here. I'm not pulling any punches, okay!?"

Wakaba's weapon was a wooden sword reinforced in strength and weight by an iron core. She also had a scabbard as it was essential to performing iai techniques.

Yuuna's weapon was iron tekko gauntlets, but with the metal wrapped in cloth so as to avoid inflicting serious injury.

Players would retire if they themselves admitted defeat, or if they were hit by an attack that would have been fatal had they been using real weapons.

(...)

Chikage took a deep breath and watched the two fight.

Her plan-- Hide out the early battle and wait for the others to eliminate each other. By the time only one or two remained, they would presumably be fatigued. Unburdened by such a disadvantage, there would be no way for Chikage to lose.

(Nogi-san and Takashima-san are both formidable enemies... So it'd be a blessing for either of them to be retired...)

Yuuna and Wakaba exchanged serious glances.

Wakaba placed her hand on her wooden scabbard.

- "Victory to those who take initiative!"

In an instant, Yuuna closed the gap between them with a thrusting strike.

However, with flawless timing, Wakaba unsheathed her wooden blade in sync with Yuuna's attack. Yuuna's fist and Wakaba's wooden blade struck each other with a heavy thud.

- "Haaaaaahhh!"

- "Hwoooooohhh!"





Blade and fist crossed again and again. They were evenly matched. Since Yuuna was able to attack with both fists, she was able to dole out a higher number of punches. However, each of Wakaba's individual hits dealt more damage.

- "Teyahh!"

Yuuna's fist knocked away Wakaba's wooden blade.

- "Khh!?"

- "This ends it!!"

Yuuna threw a finishing blow-- but before it could connect, Wakaba switched hands with her scabbard and swung it at Yuuna's torso.

- "Uwah!?"

Caught off guard, Yuuna quickly guarded with her left arm, blocking the scabbard attack. However, the sheer might of the throw knocked Yuuna back.

Wakaba had previously used her scabbard offensively against an evolved Vertex. The sword is not the only weapon in swordsmanship.

Wakaba tried to keep putting the pressure on Yuuna with close-range attacks, but she was interrupted by none other than Chikage.

- "I won't let you...!"

Chikage swung her dull practice scythe at Wakaba. Wakaba dodged at just a hair's breadth. Regardless, she was interrupted from attacking Yuuna.

(I intended to keep hidden until one of them retired, but... I just couldn't help myself when I saw Takashima-san in danger...)

Chikage horribly regretted her brashness.

- "Thanks, Gun-chan. You're a lifesaver!"

Yuuna smiled at Chikage.

- "No... don't mention it..."

Chikage no longer regretted her decision.

In the meantime, Wakaba picked up the wooden blade that Yuuna had knocked away.

- "Let's start over."

Wakaba resheathed her wooden blade and faced Yuuna and Chikage.

- "But it's two against one... You don't... have a chance..."

- "Nope, make that three against one."

Perhaps drawn by the sound of clashing weapons, Tamako showed up at the outer citadel as well.

Tamako had determined that the most formidable enemy in this battle was Wakaba. Though Wakaba and Yuuna were close power-wise, personality-wise, Yuuna would not go at full strength in a battle "between friends". Wakaba, on the other hand, would probably not have any qualms going at full strength. In that case, the three of them should first take out Wakaba.

- "Fine... Come at me, you three. Iaido has several proposed forms for one-vs-many combat. Allow me to show you the true strength of Iai."

Wakaba lowered her stance and touched the handle of her sheathed wooden blade.

Yuuna, Chikage, and Tamako each readied their stance as well.

The three-vs-one fight would be over in a mere matter of seconds.

Yuuna, Chikage, and Tamako all began to attack Wakaba at once.

First, Chikage jumped up for a downward swing of her scythe, but Wakaba cut her down with a single counter swipe. Koori Chikage: Retired

- "Gun-cha--"

Yuuna froze for just one moment out of concern for Chikage. Wakaba used that opening to smoothly transition from her first strike and cut down Yuuna. Takashima Yuuna: Retired

Immediately, Tamako came to a decision. Realizing she couldn't win a one-on-one confrontation with Wakaba, she slammed on the brakes, made an about-face, and ran for it.

- "Tamako!? Don't run away!"

- "Retreating is just another tactic!"

Tamako jumped down from the stone wall and into the cover of the woods.

Wakaba stood on the roof of the castle tower in search of Tamako.

As Hinata watched the battle progress with her binoculars through the third story window, Wakaba asked her a question.

- "Hinata, who's left?"

- "Just you and Tamako-san."

- "Anzu retired?"



- "Yes. She lost to Tamako-san before Chikage-san and Yuuna-san were eliminated."

(Then I only need to defeat Tamako now, huh...)

If she avoided any long distance attacks and brought the battle into close-range combat, there would be no way she could lose to Tamako. Wakaba's sword had the advantage over Tamako's bladed yo-yo in terms of close combat power.

Suddenly, the bladed yo-yo flew out from the trees underneath the castle tower, straight towards Wakaba.

Since she was vigilant about her surroundings, Wakaba was not taken off guard. Wakaba easily dodged the bladed yo-yo attack and leapt towards the direction the attack came from.

And there... Tamako stood from atop a tree branch.

- "Oh crap!"

Tamako tried to bring the bladed yo-yo back to her grasp, but she was too late. Before the yo-yo returned, Wakaba closed the distance to Tamako, unsheathed her wooden blade and cut--

- "!?"

--but before she could land a strike, a well-aimed arrow struck Wakaba on her right hand. Since the arrow was covered with a soft rubber guard, it didn't pierce the skin, but the impact caused her to drop her wooden blade. In a flash, a second arrow struck her scabbard, causing her to drop it to the ground as well.

- "Arrows...!? But I thought Anzu retired already...!?"

Before she could get an answer, Tamako's recalled bladed yo-yo struck Wakaba in the back and fell to the ground.

Afterwards.

Wakaba had fallen to the ground, tied up in Tamako's bladed yo-yo wire, completely immobilized.

Anzu and Tamako stood before the bound Wakaba as Anzu pointed her crossbow at her.

- "Khh... But I heard Anzu retired earlier..."

- "I had Hinata-san agree to help me out. I requested she say I retired earlier if anyone asked."

- "Wha...!?"

Meanwhile, in the Marugame Castle Tower, Hinata murmured apologetically.

"I'm sorry, Wakaba-chan... It was tough having to lie to you... but I wasn't exactly a referee to begin with, so nobody ever said I was obligated to give out truthful information..."

Hinata looked at the smartphone she held in her hand. On the screen was a picture of Wakaba doing combat training during lessons yesterday. Normally during hero training sessions, Hinata would undergo miko training in another room, and thus she had no opportunities to take pictures of Wakaba training... As such, this particular picture was Anzu's payment in return for her cooperation.

"Now my treasured Wakaba picture collection is one step closer to completion."

"... I admit defeat. Finish me off."

Wakaba graciously admitted defeat.

"Our tama-teamwork was a success!"

Tamako puffed out her chest in pride. Running away from Wakaba was just another link in their chain of tactics. Tamako and Anzu had teamed up from the start. Tamako would bait the enemies; Anzu would use the opening to take them out with her crossbow. That was the plan they had decided upon.

"So, Wakaba-san... This is the end."

Anzu slowly pulled her crossbow's trigger.

But the arrow didn't hit Wakaba.

"Ow!!?"

Instead, it slammed into Tamako's forehead.

--"... huh?"

Wakaba and Tamako blinked in confusion simultaneously.

Anzu smiled and said,

"There, now Tamacchi-sempai is retired too. Wakaba-san admitted defeat earlier, so that counts as a retire. I win."

--"... huhhhh!?"

Apparently Wakaba was not the only one who Anzu fooled.

"The threat who should've been top priority... was Anzu..."

Tamako muttered with drooping shoulders.

And thus, the first mock battle royale ended with Iyojima Anzu as the winner.

As winner, she had the privilege of ordering the other heroes, but--



- "Tamako, be mine..."

- "W-Wakaba-kun... I'm sorry, but there's someone else that Tama likes..."

- "Hold it right there, Wakaba-kun! You're disturbing Tamako-san!"

- "Oh, Takashima-kun... Wait, what the hell is this!?"

- "Cut, cut! That's no good, Tamacchi-sempai! You need to say your lines properly!"

In the classroom, Wakaba had driven Tamako to the wall, blocking her escape with her arm as she whispered sweet words into Tamako's ear-- the classic "kabe-don". And then Yuuna came in the middle to separate the two of them... the classic love triangle.

Anzu was recreating one of her favorite scenes from a romance novel using Wakaba, Tamako, and Yuuna as actors.

- "I can't say such embarrassing lines! Hell! Why does Tama even have to play the role of a 'quiet, timid girl!'?"

- "Because part of this heroine's character is that she's short. So I thought it might be the perfect role for you, Tamacchi-sempai."

- "You calling Tama short!?"

- "While we're at it, why do I have to wear male clothes..."

- "Me too... it feels kinda... strange to wear a boy's uniform."

Wakaba and Yuuna were wearing male uniforms.

- "It's to increase the level of accuracy, obviously!"

Anzu was a strict director.

Incidentally, Hinata was appreciating Wakaba, Yuuna, and Tamako's performances with a warm smile on her face. And it goes without saying, but she didn't forget to snap pictures of the situation with her smartphone.

- "A-anyway! I did exactly as you wanted, Anzu! We're done fulfilling your command, aren't we!?"

- "Can I... stop here too?"

Tamako shouted with a flushed face. Wakaba hunched over in exhaustion.

- "It was fun, but it really is kinda embarrassing, huh."

Yuuna spoke in embarrassment as well.



- "Well, it was a little lacking in accuracy, but let's leave it at that. Now then, next..."

Anzu's eyes turned toward Chikage.

Chikage's body twitched and shuddered.

- "I have to do... something that embarrassing too...? ... P-please... no...!"

- "Heh heh heh heh heh. Now what sort of role would suit Chikage-san the best?"

A wicked smile spread across Anzu's face.

- "Ugh..."

Chikage stiffened.

But Anzu shook her head side to side.

- "Chikage-san, I'll give you a different command."

- "Huh...?"

When Chikage looked at her dubiously, Anzu took out a white sheet of paper from the teacher's desk and held it out to Chikage. Written on the sheet was "Diploma Third Year Koori Chikage".

- "My command is for you to accept this."

- "This is..."

Chikage looked at the diploma in confusion.

Yuuna smiled and said,

- "If you think about it, you're a third year, so you really should be graduating now, right, Gun-chan? So we made this diploma for you."

Since they all took lessons in the same classroom, none of them were really conscious about it, but Chikage was a third year middle school student. In a normal school, it would be just about time for her graduation ceremony.

- "That said, though you'll be moving on to your first year of high school, you won't actually be going to a new school."

Tamako spoke with a wry smile on her face. Since this school was established as a way to gather all of the heroes in the same place, their physical school wouldn't change even once they moved on to high school.

- "But still, it's best we do this at least for formality's sake."

- "Yes, I agree."

Wakaba and Hinata nodded.

Since she wasn't changing schools, "graduation" had felt meaningless to Chikage, and thus she herself had forgotten about it.

But still--

- "... If it's a command, I guess I've got no choice..."

And with that, Chikage took the diploma.

The girls started walking back to the dorm as the sun set.

- "Dammit, I would've won that mock battle royale if I didn't let Anzu trick me!"

- "But Tamacchi-sempai, I think you would've lost to Wakaba-san if you fought her alone."

- "What was that!?"

- "Yuuna, next time, come at me at your full strength."

- "Huh? But I did come at you at full strength!"

- "No, your movements were clearly weaker compared to when you fight against Vertexes."

- "Next time... I won't lose..."

- "Chikage-san, if you had kept yourself hidden while Yuuna-san was fighting, you might have won... You did have tactics that would oppose Anzu, after all."

The girls spoke in high spirits as they walked.

- "Let's make another opportunity to have fun together like this again soon."

Everyone nodded to Wakaba's words.

The view of the Seto Inland Sea from Marugame Castle was as peaceful as ever.

The next Vertex invasion had yet to happen.

(Chapter 12 End)